

An Exposition of the Prophecies.

BY J. B. LAIR.

Continued from last week.

Now in order to get to a proper understanding of what the kingdom of God is according to the Scriptures we turn to the seventh chapter of Daniel, and I wish to remark before taking up that chapter, that I shall not enter into detailed exposition of the chapter, but shall examine far enough to get at least a comprehensive understanding of it before the reader, by calling out the main facts. Daniel saw a vision, and in that vision he saw four beasts, the first 'was like a lion,' the second 'like a bear,' the third like a leopard,' and the fourth, Daniel does not stop to describe in particular what it was like, but says it was 'dreadful and terrible and exceedingly strong,' and was diverse from all the beasts which were before it; and Daniel further says, 'I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the ancient of days did sit, whose garments were as white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool, his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.' Dan. 7: 9. 'And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' 14 verse.

If we go back to the 2nd. chapter of Daniel, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, we hear Daniel in the interpretation of it, saying, 'and in the days of these Kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever, and the dream was certain and the interpretation thereof sure.' 44, 45 verses.

If the reader will stop now and take the trouble to read the 2nd, and 7th, chapters of Daniel, he will be better able to understand the subject as we proceed with it. Presuming that you have read them, we proceed. We notice that the first kingdom in this vision was Nebuchadnezzar's, from the Assyrian. The second, was the Medo-Persian. Third the Grecian, and the fourth was the Roman. 'And in the days of these Kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, and it shall never be destroyed.'

It makes but little difference to us when these four first kingdoms existed, but the important point is to know when the God of heaven has, or will set up his kingdom. The student of history is acquainted with the dates that the first four existed, and we could give them from historical data, but do not think it necessary here, if even we had space to spare, but we wish, as near as possible to get at the date or the time of the fifth universal kingdom, which is the one that the God of heaven shall set up.

I wish to call particular attention to the fact that the three first kingdoms were of a strictly political nature, while the fourth kingdom was diverse from all the preceding ones. That fact signifies something, or that difference would not have been made in the narrative. If then the first three were strictly political, and the fourth was different from them, it was not strictly political. This fourth kingdom, or the fourth beast rather, was 'dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, and it has great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it,' and it had eyes, and 'a mouth speaking great things,' and the Revelator says, 'it became drunk on the blood of the Saints,' and it is also called 'the great whore the mother of harlots' &c. It only remains to say, this fourth beast is the Roman Empire. But now the question arises, when did this fourth kingdom become 'diverse from all the others'? If history teaches anything, it teaches this one thing, *i.e.*, that the Roman kingdom was not yet different from the preceding three, when Christ was on the earth; for it was at that date in its history, still strictly political, and remained so for more than 300 years afterward. The fact is it never became 'diverse' until in the beginning of the 4th, century, when Constantine run the church

and state together. Then it began—take notice to the term began, for it only begun to be 'diverse,' only begun to become 'powerful,' and 'dreadful,' and 'devour,' and 'kill,' and 'become drunk on the blood of the saints.' We now notice that this fourth beast had 'ten horns,' and 'among the ten horns there came up a little horn;' it was this little horn that 'had a mouth speaking great things,' and that 'became more stout than his fellows, and made war with the saints and prevailed against them.'

This was the the religious part of it, and is now better known as the Roman Catholic church. I shall rest, here the subject proper, long enough to refute a very prevalent idea that is extant in the world, and that is in reference to the present existence of the kingdom of Christ. I am not denying that Christ has a kingdom in embryo—just as the saints are Kings and Priests in embryo—in other words, in prospect. It is the belief of Christendom today that Christ set up a kingdom on the day of Pentecost, I can only say that he did not set up the kingdom that the prophets all prophesied about for the reason—

1st. That the prophetic kingdom is to be a universal kingdom, just like the four preceding ones.

2nd. The saints are to possess the kingdom, and they with Christ are to reign over the whole earth. That is not a fact by any means, now, notwithstanding the fact of the claim of Christ having a kingdom on earth.

3rd. Under that reign and in that kingdom 'all nations are to be blest;' such is not a fact nor never was, nor will it ever be until Christ comes in person to reign.

4th. The claim of the kingdom being set up at Pentecost, was not at the right time according to the prophets. Christ's kingdom is to be set up 'in the days of these Kings.' In the days of what Kings? is what we must find out. It could not mean in the days of the four Kings of the four universal kingdoms in the vision, for they succeeded each other, and I am entirely safe in saying that three had passed away, and hence there could not 'Kings' remain.

5th. According to Nebuchadnezzar's vision there was to be a division in the fourth kingdom—a leg division; this division did not take place until the latter part of the fourth century, and as Christ's kingdom is to break in pieces and destroy all other kingdoms, it would have to destroy this divided kingdom before it had an existence.

6th. It is to be 'set up in the days of these Kings.' You will have noticed that the 'ten horns are ten Kings.' It is in the days of these Kings, when the God of heaven is going to set up His kingdom. It is in the sub-divided state of the Roman Empire that the kingdom of God will be set up. There was a division—the leg division, the eastern and western empire, then after that comes the sub-division. The ten toes, and the ten horns represent the same thing, and they represent ten kingdoms, all in the old Roman Empire. Now please take a map of the Orient, and lay out the old Roman Empire, then count the kingdoms that now exist in that territory—it will be found that there is, not far from ten one way or the other, if not exactly ten. Indeed it does not necessarily need to be just ten now, for the time is not just immediately here yet; the time has been however when there were just ten kingdoms in the prophetic territory. Let us take another view of the matter: The Roman Empire was divided into the eastern and western divisions, after Papacy had assumed control of the nation. I mean after the church had assumed control of the state, that made two kingdoms, and now the first solution is not satisfactory. It may be that in the days of these Kings, that God's kingdom will be set up; they are in their divided state, and exist today—and one thing is remarkable, very remarkable indeed, and that is, that the 'fourth kingdom' has held the one and the same name, from the days of the Cæsars down unto this present day. It was the Roman Empire then; it is the Roman Empire today, presided over by the 'little horn'—the Pope, under the several Kings however. I promised myself and others, that I would not commit the error that is so commonly committed, by fixing the exact time of Christ's coming, I say Christ's coming here for the

reason that His coming, and the setting up of the kingdom are so closely connected together, that the terms may be used interchangeably without comparison. There is one point however, that I am not willing to pass by without noticing. In the 26 chapter of Leviticus, where God is reviewing His law to Israel, and tells them how great their blessings shall be if they keep the covenant; He also tells them what their punishment shall be, if they do not keep the covenant. He tells them that 'seven times,' shall pass over them in their outcast condition. 'Seven times' being 2,520 years. Now the fact is that Israel under Zedekiah—Zedekiah being the last King in David's time, were taken captive and carried into Babylon, about 590 or 594 years before Christ—say 594 years added to 1,888, makes 2,482 years, take that number from 'seven times or 2,520 years, and we have 38 years left; hence if dates are correct, by the time 38 years have elapsed, the time of the setting up of God's kingdom on earth will have fully arrived, and I feel confident that these figures approximate the time, for it is no doubt a fact that we are living away down in the toe condition and of the image, and when the image is exhausted, in other words when the image is full, there will be a change, and that change will be brought about by the introduction of Christ's coming, and kingdom. And in closing this chapter, let me yet say to those who have fears of another Catholic persecution, abate your fears, their work is done, their race is run, they never will, nor can, get power enough to wage another persecution.

I have tried to show in this chapter that the prophetic kingdom has not yet been set up, but that it is the purpose of Christ's second advent into the world to set up that kingdom, and reign over it, and I believe that there is enough untold yet, relating to the subject to demand another chapter, so we close this and open another one. I have not the history at hand now, showing the exact date of the fourth kingdom taking the name 'Roman,' but I am led to believe that it was much earlier than the Cæsar's proper.

Morning Bible Reading.

The best time for Bible-reading is in the morning. The mind and body are fresh after the repose of the night, and the highest powers of thought may be brought to bear upon the chapter selected. But, with most people, each recurring morning brings its own pressing tasks. Business cares, the daily toil and the duties of the house are the first and most engrossing concerns. Some hours must pass, with many, before they can find time to sit down to any quiet reading. Let the plan be honestly tried by taking some words from God's book for the meditation of the morning. Make for the month a fair, steadfast trial of the plan of studying the Bible when your faculties are at mental high-water mark. You wonder at the familiarity of this or that friend with the Psalms, the Epistles, the Gospels. It has been gained, a little at a time, by patient, daily reading—thoughtful, prayerful reading, too, which was hived by the soul as something worth treasuring. We shall all gain immeasurably in our influence as well as our comfort by giving more of our unwearied thought to the holy Book. A few tired, sleepy, worn-out moments at night, and those only, are almost an insult to the Master whom we profess to serve.—SELECTED.

Oh, the grace of God! I am overwhelmed when I come to think of it. Let the line run out with the anchor until all the cables of earth are exhausted, that we may touch the depths. Let the archangel fly in circuit of eternal ages in trying to sweep around this theme.—TALMAGE.

This sword has two edges—with one it heals, with the other it wounds; with one it saves, with the other it damns. Oh, it is a dreadful weapon when it strikes with its wounding, damningside; and the other side thou hast nothing to do with while in any way of unholiness. Not a kind word in the whole Bible is spoken to one sinning. Now, poor creature, think, and think again. Is there any sin worth hazarding all this confusion and mischief, which if thou art resolved to have it will inevitably befall thy soul?—GURNALL.